

Despatch BOX



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BOOSTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PACIFIC REGION

Australia's federal, state and territory parliaments are joining together in an initiative to support gender equality in the Pacific region.

As part of a new program *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* announced by Prime Minister Julia Gillard at the Pacific Islands Forum earlier this year, Australian parliaments are participating in a 'Pacific women in parliament' project aimed at addressing the underrepresentation of women in the region's political life.

In the Pacific region, women currently hold only five per cent of parliamentary seats, although the recent election of four additional women to Pacific parliaments shows progress is being made.

Coordinated through a national committee of women parliamentarians, the project will support the professional and skills development of Pacific women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff; develop engagement between women in the



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PACIFIC PROGRESS: *New project to support women in politics*

Pacific region and their parliaments; and support research into gender equality and creating gender sensitive parliaments.

With funding from AusAID, the project aims to build more effective links between Australian and Pacific parliamentarians, both women and men, to help ensure women get an equal opportunity to participate in the political life of the region.



JOHN GOLLINGS

REFLECTING A NATION: *Parliament House celebrates 25 years in 2013*

THREADS OF OUR NATION TO BE CELEBRATED

When Australia's new and permanent Parliament House was opened in 1988 the very essence of our nation was woven into the fabric of the building, reflected in the art and craft commissioned for Parliament House and the design work that made the building unique.

In 2013, to mark its 25th anniversary, Parliament House will be celebrating these threads of our nation, as Canberra celebrates its centenary as our national capital.

An Open Day will be held at Parliament House on Saturday, 14 September 2013 at which parliament's Great Hall will be transformed into a journey through 25 years of Capital Hill history. A new book on the art and craft of Parliament House has also been commissioned and special exhibitions will be held during the year.

Follow the 25th anniversary through the new web page at: 25years.aph.gov.au